

## HAPPINESS IS.... A PAL AND A HOME

WHEN you've got a pal, you've got everything. And there can be few chums who are closer together than Joey Deacon and Ernie Roberts (right).

They have come a long way since the publication of Joey's book 'Tongue Tied,' which tells the story of his life in a hospital for the mentally handicapped.

Now they are pioneering a new form of care for people in long stay hospitals, by demonstrating that together with two other pals, Michael

Sangster and Tom Blackburn, they can live as a team with the minimum of supervision from nursing staff.

Plans are well in hand to build a bungalow in the grounds of St Lawrence's Hospital, Caterham, for them. It will be the forerunner of several more for other patients. And thanks to a generous donation from Dutch television viewers, the dream is nearing reality.

Below, the now famous team who co-operated to write Joey's book, pictured with Dr Geoffrey Harris, consultant psychiatrist at the hospital, who encouraged them in their work.

Full report, page 7.



## NI levy: PM will try to help

PRIME Minister, James Callaghan, promised in the House of Commons to try to find a way of helping charities hit by the new National Insurance surcharge. Concern over this additional levy was first voiced at The Spastics Society's AGM.

It is estimated that the

two per cent increase on the employers' National Insurance contributions would cost the Society an extra £93,000 gross each year—money which could otherwise be used in direct aid to spastic people.

Mr Callaghan said on February 15 he was studying the problem after meeting a

delegation from churches and charities. The representatives urged that the National Insurance surcharge should not be imposed on non-profit-making organisations, particularly since they could neither pass the surcharge on nor set it off against tax.

Mr Callaghan added that he had been impressed by their undoubted difficulties and was anxious to find a way of meeting them which did not involve a great deal of expenditure.

### Doll collapsed — to a record?

A TOTAL of £313 was collected from a 'Spastics Doll' placed outside a Middlesbrough shop. The box—a model of a small girl—collapsed under the weight of the cash. Cleveland Spastics Society thinks this may be a record, unless, as they say on 'That's Life,' you know differently.

## Who will win top accolade of courage?

NINE spastic men and women, nominated for the courageous way they have overcome their handicaps, were selected as finalists in The Spastics Society's 5th Achievement of the Year Award. They were due to travel to The Spastics Society's London headquarters on Wednesday, March 2, to hear which of them has been chosen as the winner.

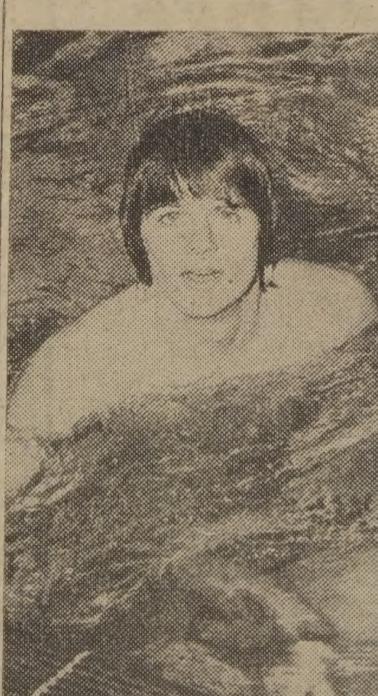
He or she will receive a silver cup and £250. Second and third prize winners will receive cheques for £25 and £15. All runners-up will receive £5 premium bonds and medals. The prize money was kindly donated by J. H. Dewhurst, the butchers.

The nine handicapped finalists include:

- A man who, despite severe limitations of schooling, has tenaciously rehabilitated himself.
- A man who received the MBE for his services to rural cottage industries.
- A disabled woman who only learned to walk in her teens, yet is now taking a degree course.
- A severely handicapped girl who was one of the first handicapped students at Durham University.
- A disabled woman who spends all her spare time fund raising for charities.
- A man, who despite being wrongly con-

demned to a mental institution for 30 years, has shown amazing powers of resourcefulness.

● A young man who was told that working would be 'out of the



A GREAT moment for Timothy Richards, 16, of Sutton Valence School, after winning a freestyle event at the national spastics swimming gala. Report and more pictures on page 3.

question' because of his handicaps, yet who successfully holds down a job.

The panel of judges who were chosen because they themselves have successfully overcome disability are: Lord Crawshaw, 43-year-old president of the Leicester Association for the Disabled; Norman Croucher, the 35-year-old mountaineer who lost both legs; Corbet Woodall, once a television newsreader who is crippled with arthritis; and Ann Darnbrough, who is the assistant general secretary of the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

A 12-year-old girl, who is spastic, yet, with no thought for herself, ran into the road to save a two-year-old boy from being run over, will also be rewarded with a special prize from The Spastics Society's Director, James Loring. She is Susan Flanagan, of Beaumont Street, Liverpool. Runner-up in this award is 22-year-old Yvonne Berry, of Haven Park Drive, Haverfordwest, who, despite being educationally subnormal, has achieved a great deal by her courage and determination. Yvonne will receive a £5 Premium Bond. Both girls will receive medals.

Full report and pictures of the Achievement Award ceremony in next month's issue.

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## £7,000-plus from groups for help to families

LOCAL groups of The Spastics Society are continuing to give generous support to the Family Services and Assessment Centre at Fitzroy Square. During 1976 a total of £7,620 was donated by 78 local groups.

The sum of £500 was given by both Folkestone and District Spastics Society and the Weston and District Society for Spastic and Mentally Handicapped and other amounts ranged down to £10.

The South East Regional Fund contributed £3,500 and the East Regional Fund £3,000 towards the overall deficit of Fitzroy Square. There was a further donation from the South East for running costs of the Social Work and Employment Department and the London Region gave £3,000 for the same purpose.

Staff at Fitzroy Square also ran a successful lunch hour fair which raised a total of £920 for the centre.

### 'Society was her life'

PARENTS and relatives of spastic people were saddened at the death on February 23 of Miss Ursula Ballance, who was a social worker for The Spastics Society for 15 years. She will be remembered with affection by families throughout the East Region where she was regional social worker for many years.

Miss Ballance, who was in her early 50s, died at Cambridge as the result of a serious illness.

'The Society was her life,' said Miss Margaret Morgan, Head of Personal Services for the Society. 'Many people have been in touch with us asking if we have any plans to mark Miss Ballance's work, and it is likely that we will inaugurate a small memorial fund in her name which will be used in some way which we feel would have pleased her.'

## Group's gift — £1,540



### Access only partial for museum visitors

MANY museums and art galleries now display the 'Disabled Access' sign. But how accessible are these buildings in practice? Two disabled people, one in a wheelchair, the other walking with difficulty, decided to visit their local art gallery. Although it had the access sign, it soon became obvious that this was meant for parties of disabled visitors rather than people calling casually as members of the public.

The couple were unable to visit the main galleries on the upper floor. They discovered afterwards that there was a service lift which they could have used but there was nothing to indicate its presence.

They also had problems visiting the restaurant and toilets. 'One way and another,'

reported the couple, 'our visit seemed to draw a lot of attention. Despite the disabled access sign it was evident that the staff were surprised to see a wheelchair there. Certainly the effort involved seems likely to deter any but the most determined and thick-skinned person from visiting.'

Their story is told in a book, 'Museums and the Handicapped,' discussed at a Leicester University seminar. As well as dealing with mobility problems the seminar examined the needs of the mentally handicapped, the blind and the deaf.

The book is available from the Leicestershire Museums, Art Galleries and Records Service, 96 New Walk, Leicester, LE1 6TD. It costs £1.05p, including postage and packing.

### Bus fares fight

FOLLOWING a report in last month's issue about a Blackpool mother's fight to gain concessionary bus fares for the disabled, Bromley Health Department has told Spastics News that disabled people in this London borough pay the same reduced fares as senior citizens.

Blackpool, Fylde and District Spastics Group is trying

to obtain the same concessions in its own area. One of its members, Judith Crawshaw, 30, is too disabled to work yet not sufficiently disabled to qualify for the mobility allowance.

Her mother, a keen worker for the local spastics' group, organised a petition which was signed by 600 people and presented to Mr Peter Blaker, MP for Blackpool South.

MR Ken Gardner (centre left), Chairman of Northampton and County Spastics Society, presents a cheque for £1,540 to Mr R. Ingram, warden of Hampton House, The Spastics Society's Adult House Unit at Northampton. Looking on are (standing, left to right) Mrs R. Lloyd, Mr R. Lloyd, Chairman of the Friends of Hampton House, Mrs Ingram and Mr Derek Pownall, a resident. Seated are two more residents, Angela Colin and Nigel Fisk. The local group's gift will probably be used to provide a charging bay where the residents' electric wheelchairs can be re-charged every night.

The presentation took place at a coffee evening organised by the Friends of Hampton House to raise funds for a party for the residents. The proceeds for the evening amounted to £220 and Mr R. Lloyd, announced that some of this money would go towards equipment for a gymnasium at the centre. Also present at the coffee evening was Mr Michael Stopford, Head of Centres for The Spastics Society. In a speech to fellow guests, he said that handicapped people should have a chance to follow their individual interests but often need help to do this. He added that residents living in a centre should be consulted on major decisions about the running of their home.

Picture by courtesy of Northampton Chronicle and Echo.

## Campaign need for handicapped seeking jobs

ARTHUR CARR, the man who devotes his life to helping disadvantaged people find jobs, has called for a re-examination of Government policies on work and training for Britain's handicapped.

A new document, 'Employment for the Disabled — a New Direction,' has been published by Carr's Rehabilitation and Employment Advisory Service. It states: 'A campaign is necessary to enable the disabled and handicapped to participate in creating a really worthwhile and beneficial rehabilitation service.'

Speaking at a Press Conference to launch the document, Mr Carr urged the

### The good ship Ajax



MISS M. Ridley, Principal of the Plymouth Spastics Centre, receives a cheque for £1,000 from Captain R. Squires of HMS Ajax. The money was raised by the ship's company during the past year.

Picture by courtesy of Western Morning News.

physically disabled and those unable to find employment following treatment for mental illness to form self-help groups all over the country.

Mr Carr criticised the present quota system which obliges large firms to employ at least three per cent disabled workers. He said: 'This doesn't mean more jobs for the disabled, only more people with minimal handicaps (such as one finger missing) being registered.' He called for a system like that used in other European countries where financial levies are imposed on firms not employing the statutory number of disabled workers.

His document proposes greater co-operation between Government and employers so that firms could be given capital grants based on the number of disabled employed.

The Government itself, the document points out, has a poor record of employing disabled people. The nationalised industries, for example, are legally obliged to meet the three per cent quota in the same way as the private sector. Yet none of those authorities for which figures are available employ the required number of disabled workers.

### Top salesman

ONE of The Spastics Society's most indefatigable workers, Mr John Bonser, of Gorton, Manchester, can claim something of a record, for when the North-West Regional Office held their first-ever competition John sold £33.50 worth of tickets — more than anyone else.

PETERBOROUGH and District Spastics Society has made donations totalling £1,400 to schools and centres connected with the handicapped.

A SPONSORED beer-drinking contest raised £450 for the North Staffordshire Spastic Association. Two men and a girl from the Penkhull Institute of Sunday Tipplers took part.

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# 'Best ever' swim gala

THE 1977 national spastics swimming gala was described as the most successful yet by the Society's Physical Education Adviser Mr Arthur Edwards. 'It ran like clockwork,' he said. 'The organisation was superb.'

'This was largely due to the fact that we cut out many of the small non-standard events.'

Mr Edwards said he had noticed a marked improvement in standards at this year's event. Some competitors who had been unable to enter the water unaccompanied in previous galas, were swimming the length of the swimming pool entirely on their own.

More than 150 handicapped people took part in the gala which was at the Robinson Pool, Bedford, on January 29. Competitors travelled from as far away as Scotland to take part. Events were kept as close as possible to ASA rules.

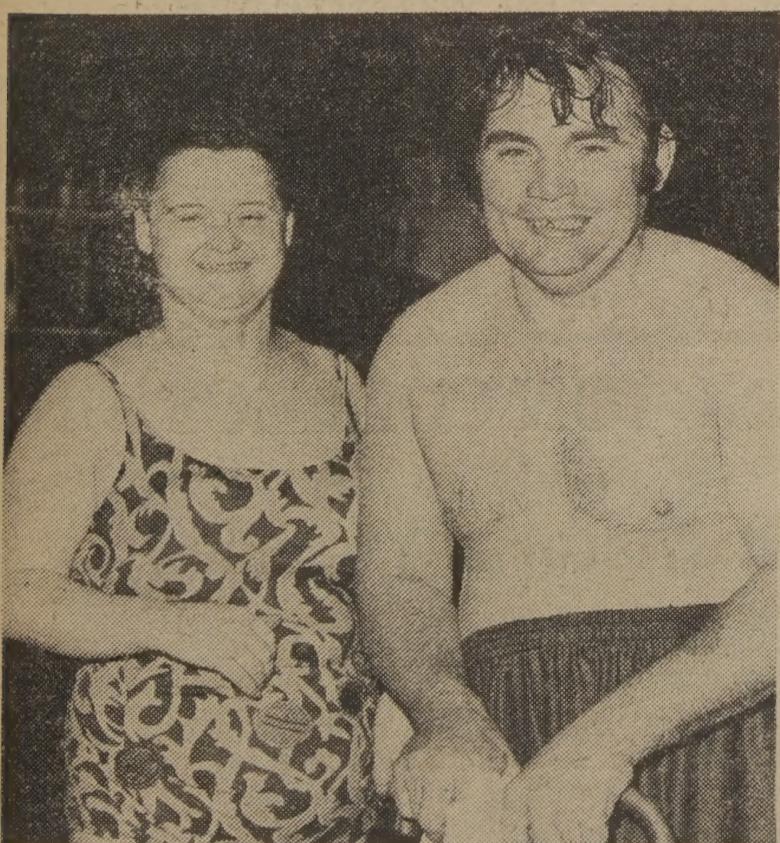
Said Mr Edwards: 'Swimming is a wonderful sport for spastics because in the water they are able to experience the freedom of movement that their handicaps deny them in everyday life.'



BELOW: Just an arms length from victory in the one length freestyle event is Anthony Honour, 18, of the Society's Thomas Delarue School, Tonbridge.



FIRST in the freestyle event was Lilian Rae from West Lothian.

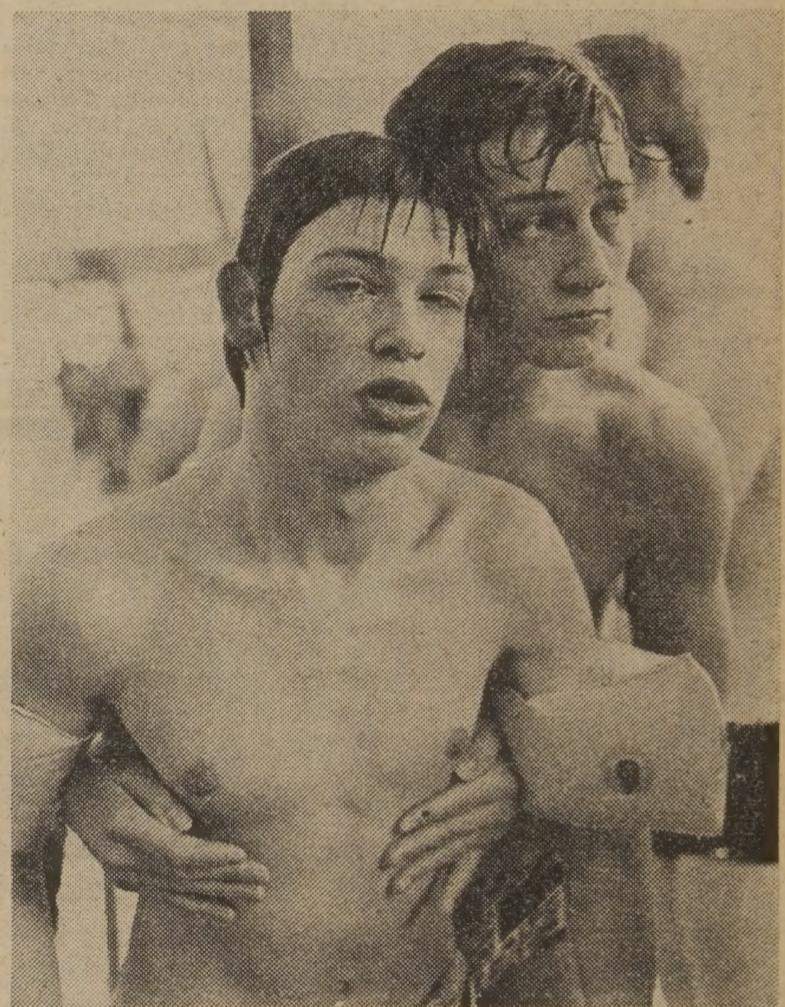


A HUSBAND and wife team at the gala were Jean and Anthony Stratford, who live at the Society's Broadstones Hostel, Birmingham.



LEFT: The winner of the two lengths freestyle event, Anne Trotman, 24, takes a well-earned rest in her wheelchair. With her is Lyn Challiner, also 24, from Broadstones Hostel, Birmingham.

THE champs! Sutton Valence School team collect their cup after winning the medley race. It is presented by Spastics Society Executive Council member Ian Dawson-Shepherd. The team, left to right, are Audrey Whitcombe, Timothy Richards, David Moore and Royston Ratcliffe.



PAULINE Monzani gets a few helpful tips from her mother, Mrs Andree Monzani.

A HELPING hand for Nigel Beames, 18, of the National Star Centre, Cheltenham, after winning the two widths with aids event.

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# Friendship Week conference

THE Spastics Society is now one of seven charities taking part in Friendship Week for sick and handicapped children. The week is organised annually to focus attention on the particular needs of these children and their families.

Highlight of the week will be a conference on 'The Family and Handicap — the Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Support Services,' at the Royal College of Surgeons on June 14.

Conference chairman is to be Dr F. S. W. Brimblecombe, consultant paediatrician in charge of the important Honeylands project at Exeter, which helps parents care for severely handicapped children at home.

Further details from the conference secretary, Friendship Group of Charities, 3 Totthoe Close, Kenton, Middlesex (tel 01-907 3024 and 01-730 9891).

## £10,000 Government grant for council

THE Voluntary Council for Handicapped Children is to get a Government grant of £10,000 a year.

This was announced by the Minister for the Disabled, Mr Alfred Morris, in the Commons.

Mr Morris added that his department was providing a further £7,000 to help with the printing and distribution of the council's first publication, 'Help Starts Here.'



## Naidex '76 published

PAPERS read at Naidex '76 Conference in Brighton have now been published in book form. Topics include 'The Return to Work After Disassembly,' 'Towards Integration,' 'Ways of Improving Employment,' 'Opportunities for Disabled People,' 'Holidays for the Socially Unacceptable,' 'Active Holidays for the Handicapped.'

Copies are available, price £9.50 (including postage and packing) from Naidex Conventions Ltd, Temple House, 36 High Street, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1JG.

The Naidex '77 Conference and Exhibition will be held at the Royal Horticultural Society's New Hall, Greycoat Street, Westminster, London SW1, from November 9 to 12.

# Income, inflation, and priorities

By Michael Brophy, Chief Fund Raising Executive of The Spastics Society

THE Spastics Society has annual deficits of about £1 million each year. Yet say the word 'fundraising' slowly and then pause.

Fundraising...

Reactions to the word seem to vary greatly. The word, let alone the concept, seems enough to make some people reach for their ear defenders. Yet it is just as important an activity to The Spastics Society as exporting goods is for the Government.

I believe we need to promote urgently the respectability, necessity, and enjoyment of fundraising throughout the Society. Great efforts and very successful efforts are being made every day by a

great number of people. Yet increasingly groups or centres are losing out on the equation: expenditure equals income available.

Is exhorting everyone concerned with helping spastic people enough? Or will the albeit reluctant drift towards relying more on The Spastics Society's national fundraising schemes become an avalanche?

Perhaps it is time for a bit of hard thinking about the role of the national Society and the role of all that goes to make it up. What should each bit have as its priority? Is the Society a safety net or does it have its own job to do? Its own priorities?

### Pioneering

At present the Society must have money to meet two needs: recurring costs and non-recurring costs. These are not quite synonymous to the running of existing establishments on the one hand and pioneering new projects on the other. But it is nearly a true comparison and, notwithstanding the fees from local authorities, nearly all 'Society' and group centres have recurring deficits.

Suppose the Society said to everybody running an establishment which has a recurring deficit — and that includes all the national schools and centres — 'you are recurring costs; you look after your own

problems because if you don't the Society cannot pioneer new projects.' What would happen?

Well...

First, it would release funds so that the Society could pioneer much more actively than it does today. For example, our contribution to research is only a very small percentage of outgoings.

Second, lots of people would go for their knuckle dusters as well as their ear plugs.

### First law

Third, the Society would have to be very clear how much is being devolved and retain control of curricula and standards.

But there is no doubt about it that money is most easily raised inversely according to the square of the distance from the need. My first law.

My second law is that the most satisfaction is found among those who have most responsibility. So raise money for x, y and z at x, y and z those there will be happier.

To do this you give centres more autonomy, even allow them to have company status

and collect directors from their immediate vicinity to run their affairs as a board.

But it would release a great chunk of the Society income, which like group income is not quite keeping pace with inflation, for real pioneering. Not just research but pioneering across many fields.

When the Society says to me 'we must have more money next year,' I look at all our plans and possibilities and they look good. They are rational and national and show quite a steep increase in income. But

then I apply 25 per cent inflation for 1975, 18 per cent for 1976 and project 15 per cent minimum for 1977 and 10 per cent for 1978 (which may be very optimistic), and I realise that in REAL TERMS we are losing ground.

So my easiest solution is to say: Collect more money at source.

My division at Society HQ then goes all out for national schemes and providing the necessary technical and professional know-how for any centre or group which asks for it.

But each unit exists or not on its own ability to fundraise.

# Helped others, now new look at life

YOUNG offenders in the Swindon area have made a day bed for spastic patients at Burderop Hospital, as part of a community service order.

Severely handicapped patients used to lie on mattresses on the ward floor during the day but with the new bed they will be able to keep warm and see what is going on.

Materials for the bed, costing about £80, were given by the hospital's League of Friends.

Commented one of the

young carpenters: 'It's given me a completely fresh outlook on life having seen people in this sort of plight.'

Pictured at the handing-over ceremony are (left to right) George Gadd, unit nursing officer, Denis Kingston, unit administrator, Keith Mitchell, John Gale and Antony Western who made the bed, Mrs Noreen Drever, ward sister and Mr Juan Vidal, charge nurse.

Picture by courtesy of Evening Advertiser, Swindon.

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# Care centre closes, but work goes on

ON July 31 the Dudley and District Spastics Group will officially close the doors on the Highfield Road Day Care Centre which it opened over 18 years ago.

Running costs of the old wooden former school building attended by nine spastics have reached a massive £5,000 a year, making the expenses prohibitive.

## Group founder

Among the spastics being found alternative work centre places is Norma Horton, 35, whose late father, Joseph, was one of the founders of the Dudley group and was behind the centre's opening.

Mrs Doreen Richardson has been the principal of the centre for nearly nine years. 'Everyone is upset at the closure, of course,' she explained. 'Friends knew we were in financial difficulties. In fact we've been drawing on capital for some years now to keep the place going, but people were still surprised at the news. One or two came forward with offers of help but by then everything was too far advanced.'

## Full time now

The decision to close was taken by the group about a year ago, but parents were officially notified in September. Now the two local authorities concerned, Dudley and Sandwell, are finalising places for the spastics in their area.

Mrs Richardson said: 'They've been very good. Norma and Judith Hampton, 35, have been coming to Highfield ever since it started, but for some years they have been attending the Dudley Adult Training Centre on a part-time basis, two to three days a week. Now they will go full time.'

'We're not getting new spastics coming to us because the local authorities are taking over the responsibility and also provide better facilities.'

'They have purpose-built centres and with brand-new equipment. We are just an old school building made of wood and we have constant problems with vandals. We're set in our own grounds, but there are people all around us—how they don't hear a dozen glass windows being broken at a time I don't understand. No

one has ever been caught.'

'At one time we used to dread coming in in the morning simply because we knew we'd be faced with clearing up broken glass before we could get the children out of the mini-bus. Now the council has put up a high chain-link fence which has helped a bit but it's not high enough

to stop glass bottles being lobbed over, so the playground is always covered with broken glass to be swept up.'

'A couple of weeks ago we were broken into yet again—obviously they were searching for money which we never leave around, because nothing was taken, but they did use the staff room as a toilet.'

'It's perfectly obvious that this is a centre for spastics—the name is up on a board but it doesn't make any difference.'

The Spastics Society originally provided the centre with a substantial grant but this ceased some years ago. In a letter to the local press, the Society's Director, James Loring, enlarged on the reasons for closing the centre.

'It is true that, due to our own financial problems, we have in recent years had to reduce and finally withdraw automatic grants from local group centres. However, where a local spastics centre is in danger of closure and there is no other provision available

we do endeavour, whenever possible, to provide financial assistance either directly or through Regional Funds.'

The Dudley Group were aware of this and consequently took the decision that as local authority provision was now available they would do better to divert their charitable income towards providing much-needed help for spastic people and their families in their own homes. I hope very much, therefore, that the local community will continue to give full support to the Dudley and District Spastics Group who wish to continue their work of helping some of the country's most severely handicapped people.'

## Bullseye worth £50



THE Lenihan brothers, of Huddersfield, hit the bullseye recently at the Wool-sack public house, Lockwood, when they raised £50 for the local spastics society. They won a challenge darts match against the Allen brothers from Barnsley.

Pictured, left to right, are the triumphant Lenihans, Vincent and Alf; Mr John Smith, landlord of the Wool-sack; Mick, Tony and Dominic.

Picture by courtesy of Huddersfield Daily Examiner.

## Party games, music and a gala tea

ST Albans Spastics Society held a successful party for the 30 handicapped children that they help, plus 50 members of their families. The party, which included a gala tea, music and games, cost £90 from group funds.

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ANTHONY Hacker and Janice Hancock.

## Club scores double in romance stakes

IT'S second time around for the London '62 Club. When secretary Janice Hancock and chairman Anthony Hacker announced their engagement, they were following in the footsteps of a previous secretary and chairman, Mary and Peter West, who met and married through the club.

They join dozens of other couples who have become engaged after meeting at '62 Clubs. Janice and Anthony celebrated their engagement at a party for about 70 of their

friends, held at The Spastics Society London headquarters.

So far they have not announced a marriage date. They hope to settle the accommodation problem first.

Janice and Anthony have worked hard to organise events and outings for the London '62 Club. Spastics News readers may remember them for their efforts in spearheading a campaign to persuade the BBC to allow severely disabled people to join studio audiences.

# Trikes: mistake made which must be put right

FOR a great many years the invalid tricycle has been a cause of war between the organisations representing the handicapped and various Governments. The situation is further exacerbated by a failure amongst voluntary bodies concerned with disability to agree amongst themselves.

The latest statistics published in Hansard indicate that the number of accidents to 21,000 cars in one year was approximately 4,900, and the total number of injuries and deaths, 556. The invalid tricycle is, therefore, a lethal machine, and it has been heavily criticised by the handicapped themselves.

It was thought for some years that a suitable alternative would be a four-wheeler, which if it were a Government issue would be free of purchase tax, as is the trike, and it would cost very little more. Some declare that it would cost less; a great variety of modifications are possible.

However, one of the major objections to the four-wheeler was that it could carry passengers and that the handicapped could take out their

friends and relatives and even be driven by them.

This, it was said, would make it far more attractive than the trike and the demand for the cars would be more or less insatiable. The answer to this was that if there were a very careful system of screening of applicants the issue of free four-wheelers could be kept within reasonable bounds.

It was around these areas of dispute that the two sides pitched their tents and for years the battle waged. In April 1972 a Committee of Inquiry under Baroness Sharp was set up and the report presented in March, 1974, recommended that trikes should be replaced by converted cars but that eligibility should be restricted to those who needed them for work, for full-time education and for essential errands.

It was rejected by a number of organisations involved with mobility. The objection was that it was too obvious a discrimination in favour of the least handicapped and the Government was committed to helping the most handicapped before improving matters for those best able to help themselves.

### £5 allowance

It seems that Labour Party thinking tends to relate the problems of handicap to those of poverty and in January, 1976, the Mobility Allowance of £5 a week was introduced. Whereas Government vehicles were allotted to people in three fairly precise categories, the Mobility Allowance was to be made available to all handicapped people between the ages of five and 65, or 60 in the case of women who are unable to walk, although this has not been fully implemented.

At the same time it was decided to phase out invalid tricycles over a period of five years and during that time attempts would be made to find alternative means of locomotion for those who would be rendered immobile by the withdrawal of their trike. However, a most vital subject upon which the Government has remained silent is that no new tricycles will be issued to school leavers and others injured by accident, who will simply receive a Mobility Allowance.

The cold facts of the matter are that a disabled person on leaving school or on leaving hospital immediately after disablement will have no means of independent transport.

It is said that it is possible to obtain help from the Department of Employment but this is a rare procedure and it is to be doubted whether that Department has sufficient funds to provide all newly handicapped people and congenitally handicapped school leavers with trikes.



"THINK again," says James Loring, Director of The Spastics Society.

It is possible for a person who at present has a trike to opt for the Mobility Allowance and it has been claimed that, given the choice, the vast majority of claimants did in fact opt for the Mobility Allowance, but what was not mentioned was that most of the claimants were non-drivers. Moreover, the Disabled Drivers' Association states quite categorically that this is not true of claimants who could drive.

### Less costly

The Department of Health and Social Security believe that cash is less costly and easier to distribute than hardware and that in many cases cash is preferable, since it gives the recipient choice, but the Department is so keen to persuade people to accept it that it has circularised trike owners to try to get them to exchange them for the Mobility Allowance. The Disability Alliance claims that in the first six months of 1976 when claimants had the choice of an allowance or the trike, pressure was put on them to opt for the allowance.

There is little doubt that the handicapped or at least the organisations which purport to represent them have been their own worst enemies in the matter. A quite vicious campaign was launched against the trike which, although an unsafe vehicle, did provide the cautious driver with a means of transport despite its shortcomings. Successive Secretaries of State had made it quite plain that the Department would not issue four-wheelers; the reasons given were almost entirely financial.

Thus the campaign against the trike has had the effect of depriving a large number of

handicapped people of their only means of mobility, and as Barbara Castle has said, mobility is possibly the strongest desire of all among disabled people and their families. Mobility gives independence.

The Mobility Allowance is a typical example of spreading the jam as thinly as possible. Obviously many people are better off with it. Mr Alfred Morris, Minister for the Disabled, claims that 100,000 people in Britain will receive mobility aid for the first time. No doubt a number of these who have not quite been able to afford a car may be able to do so.

Another advantage is that the allowance is flexible. It can be used to hire a car when necessary or used to run and maintain an existing car. But at a cost of £25,000, even if reduced by the Treasury clawing back a third or a quarter in tax, it is a vast sum of money to spend on an allowance which will completely satisfy very few people.

### Not consulted

The Government has made great play on the fact that it has consulted the organisations concerned with the handicapped. It has certainly not consulted all of them and at no time was The Spastics Society asked for its opinion except when it was sent a circular pitched in such general terms that it was extremely difficult to understand upon what exactly an opinion was being sought.

The fact of the matter is that there are, within the total number of handicapped people, a substantial number of multiply handicapped who are badly in need of a vehicle and who, dangerous though it may be, would accept a trike; but who are now being offered an annual sum which, when taxed, will hardly buy a bicycle.

I understand that discussions are now taking place with a view to allowing handicapped people to anticipate the allowance, but this would inevitably involve their being plunged into debt, probably for a number of years.

Mr Alfred Morris has dedicated himself to the cause of the handicapped. He is not only a compassionate but a very sensible man, one who would, I am sure, be very willing to admit that a mistake had been made. One hopes that he will recognise that one has been made, that he will think again, and that his senior Minister, Mr David Ennals, himself much committed to the cause of the handicapped, will give him full support.



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## Walking Royal miles

FORMER Thomas Delarue School student Andrew Berry has begun serious training.

He's working himself to the peak of fitness for a kingsized Royal Jubilee sponsored walk, this summer.

Andrew is planning to hike between the two Royal households of Sandringham and Windsor, a distance of 130 miles. He reckons it will take him six days.

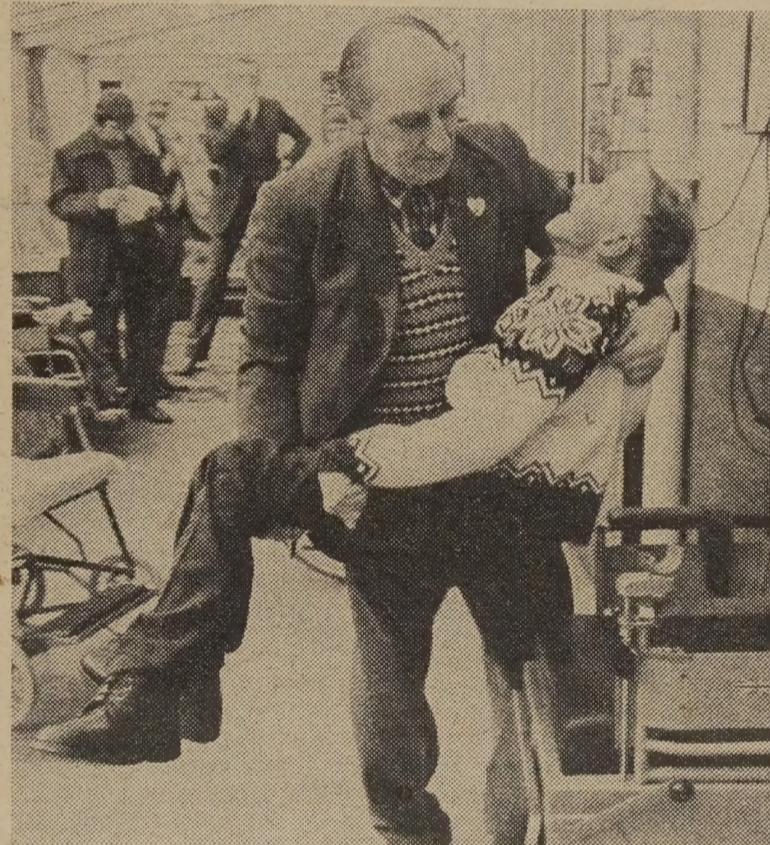
But just to make sure he can cover the distance he is spending his weekends walking, in an effort to be able to cover 30 miles a day comfortably.

If he is successful the walk will be quite an achievement for Andrew, whose handicaps affect his walking ability.

The money he raises will be divided between the Thomas Delarue School swimming pool fund, Meldreth and the Old Delaruvians Association.

Four of his friends will be accompanying him on the walk

JOEY and his pals were amazed at the size of the Dutch cheque. With them is the television team whose programme drew massive response from Dutch viewers.



CARING and co-operating is what the Joey Deacon story is all about. It was Joey's bright ideas which sparked off the book, but without the help of friends like Tom Blackburn, it could never have got into print.

## Dutch Royals there to see top riders

THE Dutch Royal family had a chance to see spastic British horse riders in action last month. A team of five riders, the top competitors at The Spastics Society's gymkhana at Buckingham Palace, travelled to Holland to give a display, which was televised by Eurovision.

It was all part of anniversary celebrations at the Johanna Stichting centre for the disabled at Arnhem, which was attended by members of the Royal family. The centre's riding instructor invited a British team to the event.

The five young horsemen were: Timothy Richards, 18, of Leatherhead, Surrey; Alan Bagshaw, 18, of Chelmsford, Essex; Anthony Griffin, 16, of

Bolton, Lancashire; Stephen Kerr, 16, of Petts Wood, Kent; and Peter Chadwick, 16, of Manchester.

Travelling with them were Mr Arthur Edwards, the Society's physical education advisor, and Mr Peter Feigate, who runs Bradbourne Riding Centre, near Sevenoaks, Kent, where several spastic riders train.

### Debut soon for new programme

BBC radio is getting switched on to the needs of handicapped people. A special programme for the disabled on Radio Four is definitely on the way.

But the BBC told Spastics News that no definite formula for the programme has yet been decided. Neither has a firm decision been made as to who will produce the programme.

The programme could make its debut as early as May this year, but a later date is more likely.

# TV show gives Joey a dream bungalow

## The famous four win new independence

DUTCH comedians Kees van Kooten and Wim de Bie were certainly not joking when they broke the good news to Joey Deacon and his friends at St Lawrence's Hospital, Caterham. They told him that a grand total of £51,000 had been raised following the showing of a short film about Joey on Dutch television.

The money will help Joey and his pals to live more independently and more pleasantly than they are at the moment. It will go towards the building of 12 bungalows within the hospital grounds, where patients can live away from the hospital regime, but still under the umbrella of hospital care.

Kees and Wim produce a satirical comedy show on the smallest of the 10 Dutch television networks. Their badge, a motif of a carpet beater, symbolises their aim of knocking the dust out of the Netherlands 'Establishment.'

"We were given a whole evening to do whatever we liked," said Wim. "In addition to comedy we included several interviews and documentary items.

"Among these was a 10-minute film about Joey Deacon. The film 'Joey' had recently been screened, and we thought it would be a good idea to make another short film about him after his success.

"We took the line that although Joey is a film star, he certainly doesn't live like one."

In fact Joey and the three pals who helped write his book — his life story — still live in a hospital ward. But the Dutch film will help to change all that. After its screening the money came rolling in for the bungalow scheme.

Before the Dutch cheque was handed over at a small ceremony at the hospital, consultant psychiatrist Dr Geoffrey Harris said he was staggered at the sum.

He recounted the story of Joey's arrival at the hospital, totally unable to communicate so that he was "under-assessed." And he told of the miracle which occurred when Ernie Roberts arrived, and inexplicably was able to understand and translate the grunts and grimaces with which Joey endeavoured to communicate.

Years later, the two, with friends Tom Blackburn and Michael Sangster, decided to

improvement in hospitals for the mentally handicapped since Joey first arrived at St Lawrence's.

"Since then there has been a 30 per cent reduction in the number of beds in these hospitals," he said. "And the nursing staff has increased by 25 per cent."

There is just one stumbling block preventing work on the first two bungalows from going ahead. It is a wrangle with the local planning authority over where they should be sited.

**Booknote:** Tongue Tied, already translated into several European languages, is now to be produced in Japanese.

**Cash note:** Croydon and Caterham schoolchildren are holding a sponsored walk for the Joey bungalow project on March 19.

## They need more room at centre

PORTRUSH and District Spastics Society has launched an appeal for funds to extend its work centre. Already nearly £2,400 has been raised, but £18,000 is needed to carry out the work.

The workshop was designed to accommodate 40 severely handicapped spastics. But the increase in the number of electric wheelchairs and other aids which employees now use has stepped up the demand for space.

Although the number of spastics regularly using the centre is only 33, it is already showing signs of being overcrowded. And there is a waiting list of people hoping to attend.

When a nearby residential hostel is opened next month, the list will be even longer.



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SN Mar3

## Aid from farmers

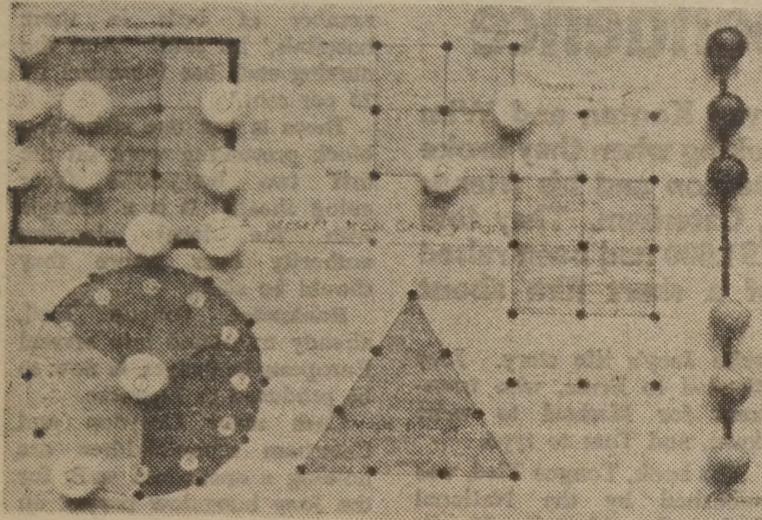
EGREMONT Young Farmers' Club, Cumbria, has raised £50 for the Society's Irton Hall School. A cheque was handed over by club chairman John Lightfoot to Headmaster Mr John Nelson, and afterwards YFC members toured the school.



## WINDOW ON WALES

by Emlyn Davies

### Puzzling – but it's a lot of fun!



MAGIC squares, circle, triangle, rectangle, line exchange, square exchange are all to be found on the puzzle board at the Society's Craig-y-Parc School in Wales.

Some of the puzzles are those of England's greatest puzzle-ist Henry E. Dudeney, others have been developed at Craig-y-Parc.

The board has strong visual appeal, high recreational value and gives opportunity for a handicapped pupil, unable to draw and write, to demonstrate ability to think logically and to handle number problems.

For spastics, unable to write, moving numbered pegs into position to form combinations and patterns to perform experiments is often their only outlet for demonstrating ability in maths.

At Craig-y-Parc many of the puzzles have been reproduced, adapted and modified under the skilled hands of teacher Jack Pettican, who has also created some puzzles of his own. They were recognised as worthy of being demonstrated and exhibited at a conference at the Royal College of Art in London.

The picture shows Mr Pettican's latest creation, a puzzle board that combines some of Dudeney's work and some of his own in a form that attracts the able-bodied as well as the handicapped would-be mathematician.

The board was made for pupil Alan Wall. Alan, alas, is unable to move pegs but he is able to direct the moves of others to the delight of himself and his friends.

Alan uses the board in his leisure time at Craig-y-Parc and, when he leaves, it will go with him.

The range of puzzles, the size of the boards and the variations in the type of pegs used means that many pupils are able to handle them.

Jack Pettican's puzzle boards are available from The Spastics Society, and anyone interested should contact either Mr Pettican at Craig-y-Parc School or The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London.

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## His rhyme wins him a record

KEVIN Brewer, of Pontypridd, spends most of his time, due to his disability, in bed. As most Welsh people will know, the famous singer and entertainer, Tom Jones, originated from the Pontypridd area, and over the years Kevin has become Tom's No 1 fan. He has been adopted by two of Tom Jones' fan clubs — 'Across the Pond' and 'We Love Tom Jones.'

Recently, disc jockey Vince Saville was playing a Tom Jones record on a BBC programme and due to a fault the record was played at the wrong speed. By way of apology, Vince said that he would present a Tom Jones LP to anyone who could answer three questions: Under what name did Tom Jones first start in show business? What is Tom's real name? The name Tom uses today?

Kevin and his mother replied to Vince in rhyme:

Up and down the valleys he sings a lot,

Under the name of Tommy Scott.

His mum and dad, who love him so,

Know that he is really Tom Woodward having a go.

His name today is now Tom Jones,

And he has made America his new home.

Vince was so intrigued when he received this novel reply that he visited Kevin at his home to present him with the record. In return for all the happiness brought to Kevin, Mrs Brewer gave Vince a pair of cuff links made by the Homework Section of The Spastics Society.

**Holiday homes in Principality**

THE 1977 edition of the Wales Tourist Board's booklet of 'Where to Stay in Wales' is now available. This booklet contains 256 pages and lists over 3,400 holiday addresses in the Principality. If anyone requires further information or wishes to purchase copies of this booklet they should contact Mr Maldwyn Davies of the Wales Tourist Board at its distribution Centre, 2 Argyle Way, Cardiff. The cost of the booklet is 45p.

AN outstanding contribution for the second year running came from Mrs Williams of Machynlleth in the County of Powys, who last year donated £35 from a secondhand toy sale and this year she more than doubled it to £80. This work is all the more worthwhile in view of the fact that Mrs Williams is also a collector for the Spastics Pool.

AT the other end of the age scale 'The Good Companions' Club, which is an old age pensioners' organisation in the County of Gwent, sent the proceeds of its annual Christmas party of £20, to the Monmouthshire Spastics Society. The Pontnewydd Pensioners' Choir sent a donation of £73 to the same Group, and it is significant that none of the members of these two organisations are under 65.

Lord Snowdon pointed out that disabled children were still unnecessarily excluded from most schools, called the Department of Health's refusal to replace the invalid trike with a safer vehicle, 'indefensible' and listed a host of other problems. 'There are now over



## KEN IS BACK IN BUSINESS

READERS will remember my report of the illness of Ken Thomas, appeals organiser of the Swansea and District Spastics Association. Now recovered, Ken has come roaring back into the fray with a cheque for £357 presented to him on behalf of the Independent Order of Foresters.

The picture shows Ken, left, receiving the cheque from Mr Norman Lambert, chief ranger, at a Foresters' ceremony.

**Cash from toy sale – and pensioners**

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## Their good turn for Jubilee

WHEN a Yorkshire Cub-Scout pack held a vote to decide which charity should get the money they had raised in a sponsored silence, the overwhelming decision was for the local spastics group.

The Temple Street Methodist Cubs of Castleford held the event as part of their Jubilee Year good turn. The highest individual collector, Stephen Coulbeck, presented the pack total of £26 to Rev S. Fell, chairman of Castleford Spastics Society.

## Snowdon hits out in Lords' debate

WHEN the House of Lords debated the report of the Snowdon Working Party on the integration of the disabled, Lord Snowdon took the opportunity to launch a salvo of attacks. Among his targets were the public in general, the Government, the Civil Service and professions such as architecture and engineering.

He singled out 'public and private inertia' as the one problem whose size his working party had totally underestimated, and added that this inertia extended from the private individual to local authorities.

He castigated those responsible for the provision of all types of public building for their lack of imagination in providing access whether to a school or a supermarket. He said that civil servants, and Government itself, also had responsibilities and added: 'We should not forget those who combined the great qualities of charity with an inadequate understanding of how it should be dispensed.'

Lord Snowdon pointed out that disabled children were still unnecessarily excluded from most schools, called the Department of Health's refusal to replace the invalid trike with a safer vehicle, 'indefensible' and listed a host of other problems. 'There are now over

## 12 hours of dancing to raise the roof

PUPILS at a Middlesbrough school danced for 12 hours to the tune of £400 last month.

That was the sum needed to top up the fund for a £1,000 roof for the courtyard of Cleveland Unit for Spastic Children.

They decided that the best way of raising the cash was to hold a sponsored dance during their half-term holiday.

The children were from Boynton School, and the event was organised by English teacher Margaret Goode.

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SN Mar27

# The family with love to spare

## They chose their handicapped children

by Liz Cook

ALAN and Anita Clark differ in one important respect from the vast majority of parents of handicapped children. They chose to have theirs. Now the Clarks would not consider their family complete without Gillian, a mongol, and Steven and Robert, both spastics.

Anita, whose husband is an architect with Wessex Regional Hospital Board, explained how they came to make their decision. 'I trained as a nursery nurse and I've always been interested in handicapped children. The reason, I know, is because I was very close to a mentally handicapped girl as a schoolgirl. Although I grew up and away from her, I've never forgotten her.'

'I've always loved children and we felt we'd like a large family, but that wasn't to be. After the birth of our first two children Miriam and Timothy I had no desire to go out to work because I wanted to be home for them when they came home from school and holiday times. Fostering handicapped children was something I felt I could do.'

### Student nurse

Miriam is 17 and in September starts at London's famous Charing Cross Hospital as a student nurse, and Timothy is 15, and hasn't yet made up his mind what to do. At first Anita applied to the Hamp-

shire local authority suggesting she should take disabled children on a short-term basis to give their parents a rest.

'We had three or four over the space of about 18 months, but it wasn't very satisfactory—it was too unsettling for the family as a whole. So I thought: 'I definitely love children, let's do it full-time!'

'Obviously my husband was in full agreement and so Gillian came into our lives and this is now her eighth year with us.'

Gillian, 14½, is a mongol with a very serious heart defect. It's too serious for surgery and it's got a lot worse. She can walk a little but mostly mostly she's in a wheelchair. I can't explain how much she's given us, she's the one that crawls into bed with us in the morning, you get so much from her. But we are prepared for the fact that she won't always be with us—we've come close to losing her several times.'

### Wanted another

'We found we were given so much by Gillian that we wanted another child, but this time one that was severely physically handicapped, and we heard of Steven. He was then five, in a geriatric ward and waiting for a place at Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton. He'd been rejected by his family. When I first saw him I thought, "Oh, what a beautiful child," and we've never looked back—that was seven years ago.'

It was through Steven that the Clarks learnt of Robert, who was living in a children's home after the three foster homes he'd been in already had broken down. Robert was in the same school bus that came to collect Steven and so he, too, joined the family in their Winchester, Hampshire, home.

Steven is a spastic quadriplegic suffering from severe spasms and attends the local Spastics Society's Mordaunt School. Apart from saying 'Daddy' and 'Ma' he has no speech. Because his disabilities are so great, Alan Clark has had to make a special



THE Clark family of Alan, son Timothy, Anita holding Steven, with daughter Miriam standing behind and Gillian, the first foster child on the right. Robert, the youngest, is away at school.

frame to hold his Amesbury chair in the family VW camper.

Robert attends the Florence Treloar School. 'I don't like him being away from home but he is very, very bright. He can just about walk with two sticks, very heavily, but really all three of them are in wheelchairs.'

Anita is very positive that the three youngest ones are very much part of the family but would she have coped so well if they had been born to her? 'I don't know—what can I say?—but I hope so. Having them has enriched our lives so much I just wish other people did the same.'

'Also, I don't know if they had been born to us if I should be so proud of them! They've developed so much in so many different ways. When Steven came to us he had nothing—not even a nightie—he was like a baby in a shawl. He'd been so starved of affection he couldn't even cry. We'd had him six weeks and I was drawing away from the house in the car when he cried for the first time and my husband rushed to him, we didn't think he could cry.'

Now I see him dressed in his school uniform going off to school, each morning, I can't describe how I feel. I forget his handicaps, I forget even that he's 11—he only weighs 23lb—he's put on two pounds in the last seven or eight years. But although he's frail in that sense he's very well. Gillian is the only one who needs any medicine.'

### Deep faith

Anita also has a deep religious faith. 'I feel that this is something I can do as a Christian.'

'When you foster a handicapped child you have to have a lot of physical strength and an ability to improvise. Also a handicapped child is expensive to keep—our heating goes on in September and it doesn't go off night or day till the end of March.' Anita gets the Mobility Allowance for Steven and is hoping that she will eventually get an Attendance Allowance for at least one of the children.'

The start of each week is marked by careful study of the diary—in all Anita is 'under' four different doctors for the children and she adds, 'with a handicapped child everything takes so much time.'



A FRUITLESS search to find a device to hold Steven's Amesbury chair secure in the family VW camper led Alan Clark to design his own. A simple wooden frame bolted to an existing seat makes Steven safe and comfortable.

## Chance to see Royal Review

HANDICAPPED people will be able to have a grandstand view of ships assembled in the Solent for the Queen's Jubilee Review of the Fleet in June. Gosport, Fareham and District Spastics Society has chartered a 180-seater boat specially for handicapped people and their families which will cruise along the Solent from 10 am to 12 noon on Sunday, June 26.

There will be some spare seats in the boat and these are being offered to any spastics group which may be interested, at a price of £1.50 for an adult or 80p for a child. There will be plenty of helpers and facilities should be suitable for wheelchair users.

Contact Mr D. Cook, social secretary, Gosport, Fareham and District Spastics Society, 46 Wicor Mill Lane, Portchester, near Fareham, Hants PO16 9EG. Tel Cosham 74451.

### Active day in London

WANT to find out more about toys, equipment and communication aids for physically handicapped people?

The toy library group, Active, are holding a seminar on Friday, March 18, between 10.30 am and 5.30 pm, at the Royal College of Art.

There will be short talks by manufacturers, designers and Active members, as well as exhibitions.

The seminar fee is £4, which includes lunch and a year's subscription to Active.

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## Judge frees 'tragic case' grandmother

AN Old Bailey judge has allowed a 56-year-old London woman to go free after the mercy killing of her spastic grandson.

Mrs Louise Edwards, of Forest Hill, South London, was completely devoted to her eight-year-old grandson, Oliver Clarke, who was subnormal and could not speak, use his hands or sit up without support.

His material needs were catered for at Guys Hospital, but each morning Mrs Edwards would take him home so that he could spend the day with her. And she was prepared to take his life rather than see him moved to another hospital further away.

The boy died after Mrs Edwards had given him an

overdose of sleeping tablets in his food. This took place on a day when a meeting was to have been held which, she believed, would have resulted in Oliver's transfer to a more distant hospital.

Mr Justice Neil Lawson told her at the Old Bailey: 'This is really a case which can only be described as a mercy killing... I think you have done more than a normal person could be expected to do in the circumstances.'

Mrs Edwards denied murdering the child but admitted manslaughter. Her plea was accepted by the prosecution. Mr Justice Lawson placed her on three years' probation on condition that she underwent medical treatment.

He said: 'This is, I think, the most tragic case that it has ever been my lot to deal with.'

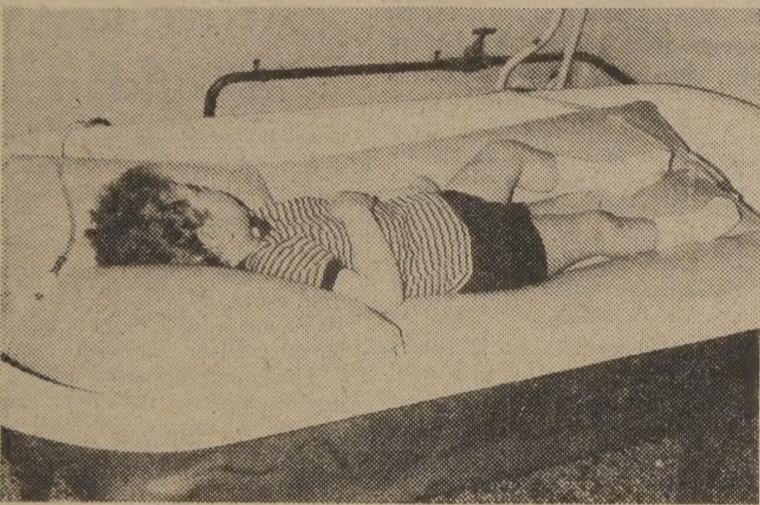
## Progress of the Peto children

THE second tape-slide programme recorded by the eminent physiotherapist, Ester Cotton, is now available from the audiovisual library of the Medical Recording Service Foundation.

As part of a two-year study on conductive education, this sequence shows the progression of five children aged between 4 and 6 years, at the Peto Unit in Sussex some six months after admission as a group and individually; learning continence, sitting, drinking, feeding and co-ordination of movement.

The tape (catalogue number 76-94) runs for 22 minutes and is accompanied by 53 slides. Of particular interest to physiotherapists, occupation therapists and child care workers, the tape is available on loan or sale from the Medical Recording Service Foundation, PO Box 99, Chelmsford CM1 5HL.

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## New group hopes to sort out transport problems

THE Spastics Society has set up a working party to look into the chaotic transport arrangements for disabled people in Greater Manchester.

North West SRO Nigel Smith said the findings of the group will also help other major metropolitan areas to sort out their transport problems as well.

He said that problems had arisen because transport services for disabled people had grown up in a

haphazard, piecemeal way, and did not conform to an overall plan.

A large number of organisations, both public and voluntary, were providing the services.

This meant that in some areas transport services were duplicated, with buses only half full. While other areas were totally deprived.

More problems arose because the services were run not by transport operators but by social services, education and voluntary organisations. In fact, Greater Manchester Transport played no part in the arrangements.

A full time research team has

been set up to examine the transport services in depth. They'll look at ambulance and minibus services used by the more severely disabled. And they'll delve into problems faced by disabled people using public transport.

The research team is amply qualified for its job. One member, Mr Jeffrey Cousins, is himself a spastic, and formerly went to the Society's Thomas Delarue School. He has a degree in transport management and planning.

Mr Philip Hartley has a degree in social administration. And Mr Graham Lightfoot has a degree in transport management and planning.

Funds for the research project were put up by the Manpower Services Commission under its job creation project. And the City of Manchester Education Department provided an office for the group's headquarters.

The findings of the research workers will be submitted to the working party, which will compile a report on ways of improving the services.

The working party is chaired by county councillor Mrs Joan Harris, with Nigel Smith as secretary. Among the eight other members is the mother of a severely handicapped spastic girl, and a student who suffers from cerebral palsy, who uses public transport.

The working party has been set up under the auspices of Manchester Joint Advisory Council for Cerebral Palsy, which is sponsored by The Spastics Society.

### His key position

THE National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations has appointed Mr Kenneth Brill as clerk to the council. He takes up his appointment — on July 1. Mr Brill is retiring as director of social services for Barnet, a post he has held since 1974.

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SN Mar13

## News about the Spastics Pool

A DISCOUNT photographic service has been introduced through the pages of Top Ten's house journal, **Westmorland House**, offering 30 per cent off the processing and printing of all films.

The service has the backing of one of the largest and most experienced photo-finishers in the country and the emphasis is very much on quality and convenience,' said Martin Handford, Top Ten's marketing administrator. 'We hope that the readers of **Westmorland House** will take advantage of this latest offer, because if it proves successful we hope to extend the service to all supporters of the Spastics Pool.'

However, if readers of Spastics News are interested in participating in this special offer they should write to: Martin Handford, Marketing Administrator, Top Ten Promotions Ltd, Westmorland House, 104 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS99 7QX.



COMEDIAN Roy Hudd cannot believe that half a million supporters of the Spastics Pool submitted entries to the Qantas competition featured on the weekly bulletin. Roy, star of the Black and White Minstrel Show at the Bristol Hippodrome, was accompanied by two of the principal dancers, when he visited Westmorland House to judge the Qantas competition. Our picture shows Roy and the two girls with just some of those half a million entry forms in the Dividends Department.

## Solving other people's problems brings her a 'phone bill headache



OTHER people's problems have produced a kingsized headache for Elizabeth Sorrell—in the form of a telephone bill for £120.

Now Haringey Council are discussing whether or not to make a grant to Miss Sorrell, of Hamilton Close, Tottenham, to help cover the costs of the advisory service she provides for handicapped people, and anyone else who has problems.

The service began in a very unofficial sort of way, with people being referred to Miss Sorrell simply because she knows so much about the problems which arise through physical handicaps.

She is herself a spastic, and a member of North London Spastics Association. But she gained a much deeper insight into these problems while researching a book.

The number of callers kept growing until now I get about 30 a week,' she said. 'You can't just turn people away. But at the moment I am having to finance everything myself, and £120 for a phone bill takes some finding.'

'As you know, I earn money by reading tarot cards, but the advice work has increased to such an extent that I no longer have so much time for this. So in addition to increasing my expenses, it's also cut my income.'

Liz Sorrell looks after all kinds of problems. 'You name it, I'll deal with it,' she says.

## East Coast holiday

CAISTER Holiday Centre, near Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, is offering a special group holiday week for disabled guests from May 21 1977. The holiday is available to parties at a reduced price of £26.50 per head, plus VAT.

The price includes all supplements and the organisers guarantee that there will be no surcharge. For further details contact John Harounoff, Ladbrooke Holidays Limited, Chancery House, Neasden, London NW10 2XE.

## Lots of letters . . . lots of money



ACTOR Frankie Howerd took time off from his show at the Theatre Royal, Bath, on February 17, to hand over a first dividend cheque for £10,000 to Mr Edward William Brice, of Southlands Weston, Bath. Mr Brice brought his family backstage to meet Frankie Howerd for an informal presentation.

## Group adopts 'forgotten' hospital folk (and it's an idea others could copy)

WHEN the better weather comes this summer, the spastics in the Dixon Ward of Eastridge Hospital, near Sandwich, Kent, will be able to laze in the sun. For the Canterbury and Kent Coast Group of The Spastics Society are buying them a large swing seat for the garden.

It is all part of the group's policy of giving a helping hand where it is most needed. As the group chairman, Harry Cock-sedge, explained: 'We have pursued our policy of adopting local projects that are helping spastics, to give more point and direction to

our work, as the group has no specific projects for spastics. At the top of the list is Eastridge Hospital, where we have adopted Dixon Ward.'

'Places like Eastridge Hospital are doing a wonderful job in caring for what I often feel are the forgotten ones. So we decided to direct some of the money raised locally for spastics to make life more homely for those in this ward.'

Dixon Ward is the home of 15 severely handicapped patients and Dorothy Davies is the sister in charge. She said: 'The group has been extremely

good to us — really done us proud. It adopted us last year and as well as visiting us the group has given us a washing machine, a room divider, seats and money at Christmas. It is only a small group, but despite that and the fact that money is so tight these days, the members really try to spread help around.'

'The patients love seeing people, but Eastridge is a tiny village, quite hard to get to, and it becomes more difficult for some of the parents as they become older. Our youngest patient is Martin Davies, and his parents are really wonderful — they come each Sunday

## Law change coming on mini-buses

THE new Bill to relax legal controls on the use of minibuses by voluntary bodies and schools has been welcomed on both sides of the House of Commons.

It is a Private Member's Bill introduced by Mr David Hunt, Conservative MP for Wirral. Previously all organisations operating minibus services were obliged to obtain public service vehicle licences, involving considerable costs.

In practice so many organisations turned a blind eye to such unworkable legislation that a change in the law was inevitable. When the Bill becomes law, voluntary organisations will be able to apply for licence exemptions.

A FAIR held by Worthing, Littlehampton and District Spastics Society made a profit of £2,000 after the deduction of expenses.

### the run of the house

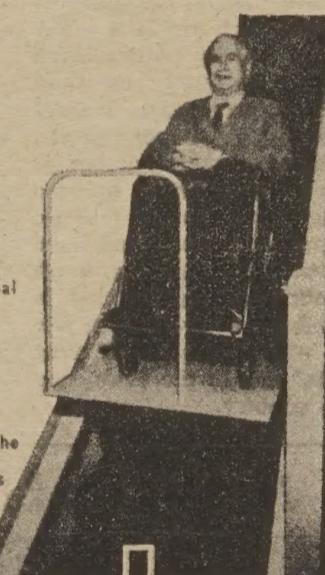
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# Town and country collectors



COLIN Freeman, box collector for East London and part of Essex, removes the cash from Sarah's piggy bank. Sarah, modelled on a young pupil of the Society's Craig-y-Parc School, is the latest in a long line of 'Spastic girl' collecting boxes, whose styles have changed over the years to keep pace with fashion.

## Generous hearts in East London

COLIN Freeman is responsible for over 1,500 collecting boxes in East London and parts of Essex, and part of his work involves finding suitable new sites and persuading shopkeepers or landlords to provide space for a box. He says that people are generally very willing to help the Society in this way—the occasional howls of protest come when he wants to remove a box which is not doing very well.

He collects between £200 and £250 a week on his round—an annual average of £10,000. The dolls usually contain about £40 when emptied every three or four weeks depending on the popularity of the site. He occasionally finds paper money in the boxes and some silver, but the bulk of the contents are made up of 2p pieces. These are mainly contributed by children who love these life-size 'dolls.' A toddler will often stop to greet his colourful fibre-glass 'friend' every time he passes and beg a coin from Mum to go in the money box.

Colin finds that there is always an increase in the doll collection in fine weather.

### Weatherwise

'People will take their children out for a walk and amble along window-shopping with plenty of time to get out their purses,' he said. 'But when it's pouring with rain, mothers tend to hustle their children past the dolls in a hurry to finish their shopping.'

Colin finds that the dolls in the East End fill up more rapidly than those in more wealthy areas on his round, but he does not think this is

### They work in all weathers

THEY sometimes see themselves as the Cinderellas of the fund-raising team. They rarely get much publicity, as their work is not usually the stuff of which big headlines are made. But in all weathers and all seasons, they tour the country picking up the proceeds of other people's generosity. And their work is vitally essential to The Spastics Society.

So today, Spastics News throws the spotlight on—the Boxes and Dolls' Collectors.

We would like to be able to show you them all, but there are rather a lot of them in the four territories of the Boxes and Dolls scheme—20 in the Northern area, 18 in the Midlands and the East, 25 in the Southern area, including London, and 16 in the West area. Between them they bought in a staggering £216,000 to help spastics in the last financial year, and they are now working towards a target of £1 million.

The unsung heroes clock up thousands of miles a year emptying the varied receptacles the Society employs to tempt money out of the public's pockets. Best known, of course, is the 3ft high figure of a small girl which stands outside shops in High Streets throughout the country. Her style has varied over the years to keep pace with changing fashions, but she has never lost her initial popularity, especially with children. The dolls are heavily outnumbered by collecting boxes on shop and pub counters, usually incorporating simple games, and here, too, the design is changed frequently because novelty value boosts takings.

As we said, we would have liked to have shown you all the collectors, but as that is impossible we have chosen just two, with widely different 'rounds,' one in the town, one in the country.

### No blues at this laundry



A SOUTH London laundrette run by spastics was opened by TV stars Yootha Joyce and Brian Murphy while next door popular pianist Bobby Crush opened a gift shop selling products made by spastics. The laundrette and shop are both part of the Stars Organisation for Spastics Good Neighbours' House project in Camberwell.



IN the heart of rural Suffolk, Valerie de Max empties the box at Quant's shoe shop in Bury St Edmunds, helped by manager Mr J. Petch. The play box is very popular with customers, and Mr Petch says: 'The person who invented it was a genius.'

## Her territory is like an East Anglian guide book

THROUGH Lavenham, Long Melford, Saxmundham, Aldborough, Colchester, Clacton, the Constable country, and Bury St Edmunds... Valerie de Max covers a territory that reads like a tourist guide book as she empties the Society's collecting boxes and dolls. She finds foreign coins in the boxes at the East Coast ports;

she knows that kindly old folk in some villages drop a weekly 10p in the box when they collect their pensions, and she empties a box at a pub where the landlady is "in touch" with the notorious William Corder of 'Murder in the Red Barn' fame.

'The landlady heard that I lived at Boxford on the Essex-Suffolk border and quite near the place where Corder murdered Maria Marten,' says Valerie. 'She said that she was in touch with William Corder (he was hanged at Bury St Edmunds in one of the last public executions in England), and she was going to prove beyond all doubt that he was quite innocent.'

### Plentiful pubs

'Yes, you certainly meet interesting people,' she said.

Valerie has many interesting sites for her boxes and dolls in the area. Shops, village stores, pubs a-plenty, of course, but also yacht and golf clubs, garages and a dentist's reception room.

One of the aspects of the job that Valerie most enjoys is that in this rural area of small towns, sleepy villages, truly local pubs and friendly little shops, she can really get to know the people who keep the boxes on their counters, and the dolls in their doorways. In the more sparsely populated parts of her territory where obviously the inhabitants, however willing to help—may not fill the box quickly, she may not call more than twice a year.

Like all collectors, she doesn't like a box to get too full, because then there is the risk of it either being tempting for the thief—or falling on a child in a shop. Theft and vandalism though, isn't much of a problem.

The boxes that incorporate a game are tops in popularity, she finds, both with the public and the shopkeeper.

Peak time of the year for Valerie's leather money bag to fill up fastest is in August and September when the holidaymakers are at the tourist spots in the area and the children are home from school. Christmas isn't a good time because so many sites put out a staff collecting box in competition! Pubs have a steady success.

Though some people do obviously pop the coins into the box with a genuine desire to help spastics, Valerie thinks that for most people the dolls and boxes are simply a useful receptacle for small change—or the donation is merely the result of a small child successfully nagging its mother.

'That's sad, isn't it?' she said. 'It's easy to forget what the money is needed for, but always at the back of my mind I have the thought that my job is part of a very worthwhile purpose. You take money out of boxes year after year, and then you go to a centre for spastics and you think, 'This is how the money is used,' and you feel just a little proud that you are doing something to help the cause.'